

CONNECTICUT UNDERAGE DRINKING LAWS

Drinking by college students has serious consequences both to their own health and safety and to their larger college communities. According to the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#), drinking by college students aged 18 to 24 contributes to an estimated 1,825 student deaths, 599,000 student injuries, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault or date rape each year.

As students and their parents consider the health and safety consequences of student drinking, they should also be aware of Connecticut laws concerning underage drinking and social hosting. Violations of alcohol laws may lead to the fines and penalties noted below, as well as expose students to additional legal liability, particularly if they act as social hosts.

Students who give parties, whether in off-campus houses or apartments or in their dormitory rooms, for example, are considered social hosts and they should take care to review and observe the relevant laws. A violation of these laws may have particularly serious consequences to the host if a guest is underage and becomes sick or is hurt. [2012 bill](#)

\$500 fine¹

- x procure alcohol. Each violation mandates a \$200 fine and/or imprisonment up to 30 days.²
- x Connecticut law prohibits anyone under 21 from even attempting to purchase liquor. Each violation mandates a \$200 fine.³
- x Violations of any of the above prohibitions may lead to a suspension of driving privileges.⁴
- x Anyone who sells, ships, delivers or gives alcoholic liquor to a minor, by any means shall be fined not more than three thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than eighteen months, or both.⁵

¹ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 309\(b\)](#).

² [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 308a](#)

³ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 309\(a\)](#)

⁴ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-111e\(a\)](#)

⁵ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 3086\(b\)](#).

Social Hosting

- x } v v š] μ š [• ^ • }] o Z } • š] w R_owns Á r % œ } Z } v á • } private property, including dwelling unit, from recklessly, or with criminal negligence, permitting anyone under age 21 to illegally possess alcohol in the unit or on the property. A violation of this provision is a class A misdemeanor
- x The social hosting law prohibits hosting a party where anyone under 21 consumes alcohol even if the host does not provide the alcohol to the minors.⁷
- x Further, the law requires such persons who knows that a minor possesses alcohol illegally to make reasonable efforts to stop it.
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Potential Consequences

- x In addition to criminal penalties, social hosting or supplying alcohol to others may result in civil liability for injuries or property damage that result, including alcohol poisoning, sexual assault, or¹⁰ death.

Other Relevant Connecticut Laws

- x Connecticut law prohibits anyone from driving a motor vehicle while drinking alcohol or while under the influence of alcohol¹¹. Potential penalties for violating this prohibition include fine, imprisonment, participation in an alcohol education and treatment program, license or nonresident operating privilege.

⁶ [Conn.Gen. Stat. § 309a\(a\)\(b\).](#)

⁷ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 309a\(a\).](#)

⁸ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 309a\(a\).](#)

⁹ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 309a\(a\)](#)

¹⁰ [Ely v. Murphy](#) 207 Conn. 88 (1988) (father of high school student who served alcohol to minor guests at high school graduation party may be liable for damages after one intoxicated minor guest struck and killed another minor guest with his car); [Vitale v. Kowal](#) 2006 Conn. Super. LEXIS 370 (Conn. Super. ~~31~~ **2006**) (college student who served alcohol to a friend in his dorm room may be liable for damages after the friend became intoxicated and died in a car crash).

¹¹ [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-213](#); [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-227a\(a\)](#); [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-227g\(a\)](#)

¹² [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-213](#); [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-227a\(g\)](#); [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-227a\(h\)](#) and [Conn. Gen. Stat. § 14-227a\(j\)](#)